



VOLUME 21, NUMBER 8

June 2016



**ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!  
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE**

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

**STAFF**

**Kathleen Manenica, MS, CN**  
Executive Editor  
State Program Coordinator, *Food Sense*  
253-445-4598  
[manenica@wsu.edu](mailto:manenica@wsu.edu)

**Martha Marino, MA, RD, CD**  
Writer  
206-817-1466  
[martha\\_marino@yahoo.com](mailto:martha_marino@yahoo.com)

**Christa Albice**  
Circulation Services  
253-445-4541  
[albice@wsu.edu](mailto:albice@wsu.edu)

**SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION**

*Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge. To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact Christa Albice, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4541, e-mail [albice@wsu.edu](mailto:albice@wsu.edu).

To access past issues, go to <http://nutrition.wsu.edu/take5/index.html>.

*Energize* is a publication of the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington*, whose staff is responsible for its content.



**Food \$ense**

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

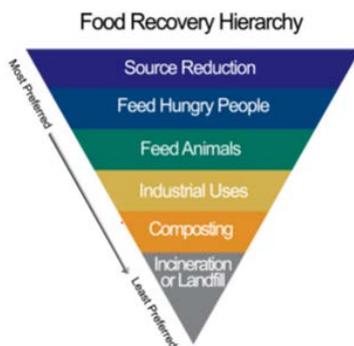
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact: <http://foodhelp.wa.gov> or the Basic Food Program at: 1 877 501 2233.

## This Month's Focus: *Food Waste*

What a waste! In the US, a shockingly large amount of food is wasted: 40% according to the USDA. Meanwhile, many Americans struggle with food insecurity. Here in Washington State one out of five people rely on food banks and food pantries that could put still-nutritious food into the hands of hungry people. Food waste is the second largest contributor to landfill volume, and is the largest emitter of methane – a potent greenhouse gas which heats our planet. In home kitchens, people waste money they have spent on food as they toss out produce that appears to be past its prime, meats uncooked before their expiry date, and packaged foods with confusing pull dates. In discarding this food, we waste the land and water used to grow it, and the labor of the people involved in its production. Many sectors can make a difference in reducing food waste from field to table: farmers and ranchers, retailers, schools and other institutions, restaurants, and consumers. Nutrition educators can make a big difference motivating and educating people to reduce their household's food waste. This issue of the *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* focuses on the problem of food waste and what we can do to address it.

**Food Recovery Hierarchy** – The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed a chart in the form of an inverted pyramid showing priorities in using food waste.



Source: US Environmental Protection Agency

If it's not reduced at the source, the top priority is recovering food to feed to hungry people through donations to food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters. The next steps are: Feed Animals, Industrial Uses, Composting, and last of all Landfill/ Incineration. At <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy> you can click on each of these steps to learn what can be done to put to good use the food that otherwise would be wasted.

**The Dating Game** – “When in doubt, throw it out” is what food safety experts have said for years, but how can consumers avoid doubt, and not throw out so much? No law exists to prevent the sale of past-date food and the USDA and FDA do not require dates to appear on foods, except for infant formula. Here's the dating low-down from USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS):

- Sell By date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before that date.
- Best if Used By (or Before) date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- Use By date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. The manufacturer of the product sets this date.

For more from FSIS, see [www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating).

For another helpful resource, see the handout by Connecticut's FoodShare at [http://site.foodshare.org/site/DocServer/Food\\_Storage\\_and\\_Shelf\\_Life\\_Guidelines.pdf?docID=5822](http://site.foodshare.org/site/DocServer/Food_Storage_and_Shelf_Life_Guidelines.pdf?docID=5822). To help alleviate confusion, in May bills were introduced in the House (HR 5298) and Senate (S 2947) to establish new labeling standards. "Best if used by" would indicate the date of the product's peak freshness, and "Expires on" would show the date when it no longer is safe to eat.

**Re-Thinking Ugly Produce** – If that apple has a harmless scar or that carrot has two "legs," should it head to the dump? Produce that's not pretty can nevertheless be completely safe, nutritious, and delicious. A relatively new movement has taken hold internationally to shift consumer acceptance to more favorably look on aesthetically challenged fruits and vegetables so that they are not wasted. The Bon Appetit foodservice corporation and Whole Foods supermarket are actively promoting ugly produce to their customers, and this has trickled down to many other supermarkets as well. It's worth asking an employee in the produce department if they have a section for blemished produce. Often they do, and prices may be lower. For a global look at ugly produce and food waste, see "Waste Not" by Elizabeth Royte, which was the cover story for the March 2016 issue of *National Geographic*, and can be accessed at [www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/03/global-food-waste-statistics](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/03/global-food-waste-statistics).

**Unique Partnership Brings Produce to Food Pantries** – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Food Assistance and Rotary First Harvest embarked on a novel pilot program to support local growers as well as bring fresh, nutritious produce into the hunger relief system. Through the Farm to Food Pantry Pilot Program, farms donate additional produce without impacting their existing business model. At last count, 23 farms and six food pantries were participating, resulting in 23,503 pounds of food purchased and 14,929 pounds donated. The program uses three models:

1. *Fresh Sheet Model* commits a certain monetary amount to purchase unspecified types of produce which are determined later.
2. *Pre-Contracting Model* specifies the type, quantity, and cost of produce at the beginning of the growing season with the farm distributing directly to the food pantry.
3. *Post-Harvest Model* commits a certain amount of funding at the outset of the season, but the food pantry pays for produce once harvested and distributed.

(Source for more information and a full report on the program, contact Kim Eads, Program Manager, WSDA Food Assistance Programs, 360-725-5651, [keads@agr.wa.gov](mailto:keads@agr.wa.gov).)

## IN THE MEDIA

**Legislators Dig into Food Waste** – For the first time, legislators on Capitol Hill held a hearing about food waste from field to table. The bipartisan House Agriculture Committee met on May 25 to hear experts and advocates talk about the magnitude of the problem of food waste, and to begin collaboration to seek solutions in all parts of the food system. According to Chairman K. Michael Conaway, 40% of food produced in the United States is wasted, ending up in garbage cans and landfills. He comments that food is the largest single source of waste in municipal landfills.

<http://agriculture.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=3393> These

discussions follow the September 2015 announcement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and EPA Deputy Administrator Stan Meiburg's first-ever national food waste reduction goal. The two agencies aim for a 50% reduction of food waste by 2030. (More at: [www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste](http://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste) and [http://www.usda.gov/oce/reports/energy/Biogas\\_Opportunities\\_Roadmap\\_8-1-14.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oce/reports/energy/Biogas_Opportunities_Roadmap_8-1-14.pdf).)



Source: Wikimedia Commons, Treasure Trove of Wasted Food

**OUR MISSION:** *The Nutrition Education Network* coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. *Energize* is one way that *the Network* shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

**Please Copy This Newsletter!** Feel free to copy any or all of this newsletter to share with others. We only ask that you credit the Nutrition Education Network of Washington and please let us know if you have made copies and to whom you distributed copies.

\* Listing of products and goods in this newsletter does not imply endorsement.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

**Consumer Guidebook on Food Waste** – Thurston County Solid Waste offers a terrific booklet guiding people to waste less food at home. Readers can take a challenge to measure the volume of food they waste by collecting it in a 2-quart pitcher, noting their successes in wasting less week by week. They can also track how much money they waste by marking on their receipts how much food they pitched, such as ½ or ¼ of what they bought. Consumers may be surprised to know that the average family wastes \$130 of food each month. The booklet’s “Produce Storage Cheat Sheet” shows how long fruits and vegetables last and how to store them. [www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/wastedfood/docs/WasteLessFoodTips.pdf](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/wastedfood/docs/WasteLessFoodTips.pdf). More resources including videos, ads, blogs, articles, educational materials, and apps at [www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/wastedfood/food-resources.html](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/wastedfood/food-resources.html).

**Let’s Talk Trash** – USDA’s push to reduce food waste at home now appears on the ChooseMyPlate website with a clever infographic and links to consumer-friendly information at [www.choosemyplate.gov/lets-talk-trash](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/lets-talk-trash). For background about the development of these resources and USDA’s initiatives, see “Food waste reduction efforts at the USDA,” *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 115(12): 1914-1917, December 2015.

**Food Storage App** – With their smartphones, consumers can use an app to search for a food to find out how long it’s safe to eat before discarding it as waste. USDA’s Foodkeeper app is described here: <http://blogs.usda.gov/2015/04/02/new-usda-foodkeeper-app-your-new-tool-for-smart-food-storage>.

**100-Year-Old Advice** – A World War I poster provides six timeless tips to avoid wasting food. Reproduced by Washington State Dairy Council as both a poster and magnet, available at <http://nutrition.eatsmart.org/products/food-dont-waste-it-poster>.



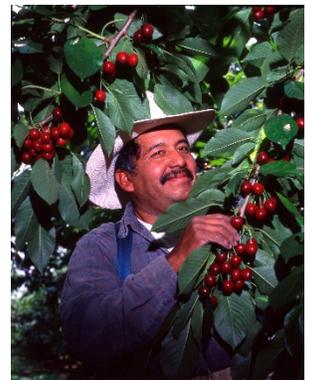
Source: WA State Dairy Council

**Washington’s Updated Health Standards for Kids** – Washington State’s Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) establishes standards for what kids in kindergarten through grade 12 should learn in school about health and physical education. These standards were just revised in March, and teachers will be using them to determine what to teach on a host of subjects, including nutrition and wellness. Nutrition educators can help classroom teachers with grade-appropriate resources. To read OSPI’s updated standards, see [www.k12.wa.us/HealthFitness/Standards/HPE-Standards.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/HealthFitness/Standards/HPE-Standards.pdf).

## WASHINGTON GROWN

**Fresh This Month** – Everything is early! Our mild winter and warm spring temperatures have brought many crops to market ahead of schedule. Although we can still find local asparagus at farmers’ markets, we’re already seeing berries that we wouldn’t anticipate until the middle of June, such as strawberries and raspberries. Before long we’ll see locally grown blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, currants, loganberries, and tayberries. Berries are good sources of fiber, vitamin C, folate, and disease-preventing phytochemicals.

**Bing Cherries in Short Supply** – Washington cherry growers are struggling with a disastrously lower volume of the Bing variety this year, with about 30% of the crop expected to be lost. Some orchards may not get picked at all because cherries are damaged due to a too-rapid bloom in the early spring and rain at the wrong time. Rainier and Chelan varieties appear to be okay. (Source: Wendy Culverwell, “Bing cherry crop a ‘disaster,’” *Tri-City Herald*, May 26, 2016.) For recipes using local cherries, go to <http://retail.nwcherries.com/category/recipes/cherry-recipes>.



Source: NW Cherry Growers and WA State Fruit Commission

## DID YOU KNOW?

Washington State is the nation’s top producer of cherries! Although other states here in the Pacific Northwest grow cherries, Washington contributes about 80% of the total regional harvest.

**OUR MISSION:** *The Nutrition Education Network* coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. *Energize* is one way that *the Network* shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

**Please Copy This Newsletter!** Feel free to copy any or all of this newsletter to share with others. We only ask that you credit the Nutrition Education Network of Washington and please let us know if you have made copies and to whom you distributed copies.

\* Listing of products and goods in this newsletter does not imply endorsement.